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NOTE 17p.; The first set of three brochures were developed by the New Jersey Task Force on Autism. The fourth brochure was developed at the Bancroft School and New Jersey Council of Organizations and Schools for Autistic Children and Adults. For related information, see EC 201 234-238.

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ABSTRACT

Four district brochures presenting guidelines on services for children and adults with autism have been combined to form this document. "General Guidelines for Education and Treatment of Individuals with Autism" addresses aspects of education and treatment, listing important questions about such topics as ancillary services, indivdualization, home programming, and accreditation. "Guidelines Pertaining to Adult Day Training/Workshops" examines adult day training/workshops, and touches upon such issues as the need for distinct services, individualized planning, and the philosophy of training and programming. "Guidelines Pertaining to Group Homes for Children and Adults" covers issues of community resources, individualization, staff training, and the role of the parents. In the fourth brochure, guidelines are offered for the selection of an appropriate educational placement for students with autism. Areas addressed are classroom environment and structure, student/staff ratio, teaching methods, progress evaluation, accountability, related services, and personal reactions. (CL)

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ED289278

GUIDELINES TO ASSIST FAMILIES AND PROFESSIONALS WHEN LOOKING FOR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH AUTISM

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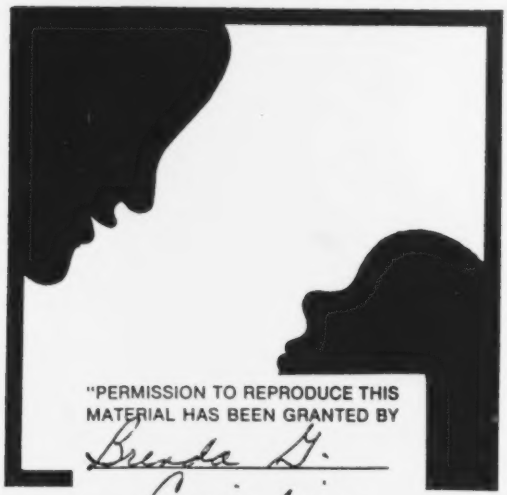
PART ONE

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATION AND TREATMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM



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DEVELOPED BY THE NEW JERSEY TASK FORCE ON AUTISM AND ENDORSED BY THE NJ COUNCIL OF ORGANIZATIONS AND SCHOOLS FOR AUTISTIC CHILDREN AND ADULTS

EC 201239

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The following guidelines have been developed by the New Jersey Task Force on Autism and endorsed by the New Jersey Council of Organizations and Schools for Autistic Children and Adults (COSAC) to assist families and professionals in identifying appropriate programs and services for persons with autism.

These guidelines reflect factors which have been demonstrated to contribute to quality services for individuals with autism. A program, however, need not meet each guideline in order to provide effective services.

Certain guidelines will be more or less important depending on the circumstances affecting the particular agency and each person with autism and his/her family. It should be noted that many guidelines apply to each section.

The New Jersey Task Force on Autism is a continuing forum for parents and professionals to address issues of concern in serving individuals with autism. COSAC, an agency which provides services in the areas of information/referral, advocacy and education, is the convener of the Task Force.

THIS BROCHURE IS PART **ONE** OF A THREE PART SERIES ON IDENTIFYING APPROPRIATE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM.

PART ONE: **General guidelines for education and treatment for individuals with autism.**

PART TWO: Guidelines pertaining to adult day training/workshops.

PART THREE: Guidelines pertaining to group homes for children and adults.

PART ONE

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATION AND TREATMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM

FACT: Individuals with autism require specialized services which are distinct from services required by other populations. However, among those with autism there are individual differences. It is, therefore, important for the educational setting to have services which are appropriate for your child.

Is the program appropriate for your child?

Are there other students who seem to have similar learning problems?

Are ancillary services provided (occupational therapy, speech thereapy, physical therapy) which he or she might need?

Are there activities which are appropriate for your child's needs?

Is a full day program available for pre-school?

FACT: All children require individualized planning to ensure appropriate treatment. Research has repeatedly demonstrated the efficacy of data-based treatments. Data allows for accountability. Considering the often slow progress of children with autism, it provides an objective means of evaluation.

Is the program individualized to meet the unique needs of each student?

Is there evidence of systematic implementation of the children's Individualized Education Plan (IEP)?

What is the staff-student ratio? Is one-to-one available when necessary? Are the children under instructional control?

Is there objective (data-based) observation, (or other good records), measurement and evaluation of the children's behavior and of the effectiveness of their programs? How are the data used?

FACT: The involvement of families of children with autism in the educational process promotes program continuity and generalization of the child's newly acquired skills.

Is there comprehensive home programming including:

Parent training activities, enabling parents to serve as home therapists?

A plan for home visits by the staff?

Parent support programs?

Follow-up services to assure continued success after the child leaves the program?

FACT: Accreditation ensures adherence to standardized basic and legal guidelines (e.g., building characteristics, fire drills, balanced lunches) and demonstrates a professional attitude regarding provision of services.

Is the school accredited by the Department of Education or is it a member of an organization whose quidelines you can refer to?

FACT: An experienced staff ensures effective treatment. Unusual challenges presented by the children with autism necessitate experience in teaching this type of population.

Is the staff experienced and credentialed?

Is in-service training available?

FACT: Accountability is enhanced when there is a good system of organization and supervision of teachers. Knowledge of the "chain of command" (whom the staff is responsible to) is important, especially in emergency situations.

Is it evident that teachers are supervised through observation?

Is the staff working appropriately with the children?

Is the "chain of command" evident? Is an organizational chart available?

FACT: Each school's program should be consistent in its approach to autism, but there are many different approaches. It is important for parents, guardians and professionals to explore what exists and make placement decisions on what is best for the child.

Is there a central philosophy of education throughout the school?

Can the teachers explain and support it?

Can you as a parent support it?

Does the school have a policies and procedures manual?

Is there a discipline policy? A child welfare policy?

Is the policy, as presented, observable?

FACT: Programs which prepare high school and college students and community volunteers to provide services to children with autism increase the possibility of a high teacher-student ratio and reflect a dedication to informing the community regarding the needs of individuals with autism.

Are there programs which prepare high school and college students and community volunteers to provide services to autistic children?

Are there internships which prepare high school and college students and community volunteers to provide services to autistic children?

FACT: It is important that teachers be informed of research which is being conducted and of new approaches which are being used.

Are there teacher training and consulting services (based on research being done at the particular school or a knowledge of credible research elsewhere) provided which:

Promote awareness of the problems and needs of children with autism?

Contribute to the service provider's knowledge of effective programs for children with autism?

Contribute to developing new programs which are needed but not available?

FACT: Children with autism require intensive, prolonged and uninterrupted education.

Is an extended school year or twelve month program offered?

FACT: Observation allows you to watch techniques at work and facilitates using them at home. Accountability is increased when the school has nothing to hide.

Is there openness?

Are you able to observe in various classes?

Is there a pleasant, positive atmosphere?

FACT: It is important to have an effective governing body which enhances communication and ensures accountability.

Is there a governing body?

What is its role?

Do you have access to it?

For the complete three part series, call or write:

NJ Council of Organizations and Schools for Autistic Children and Adults (COSAC)

123 Franklin Corner Road
Suite 215
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648
1-800-4-AUTISM (in NJ)
609-895-0190

COSAC

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GUIDELINES TO ASSIST FAMILIES AND PROFESSIONALS WHEN LOOKING FOR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH AUTISM

PART TWO

GUIDELINES PERTAINING TO ADULT DAY TRAINING/WORKSHOPS

DEVELOPED BY THE NEW JERSEY TASK FORCE ON AUTISM AND ENDORSED BY THE NJ COUNCIL OF ORGANIZATIONS AND SCHOOLS FOR AUTISTIC CHILDREN AND ADULTS

The following guidelines have been developed by the New Jersey Task Force on Autism and endorsed by the New Jersey Council of Organizations and Schools for Autistic Children and Adults (COSAC) to assist families and professionals in identifying appropriate programs and services for persons with autism.

These guidelines reflect factors which have been demonstrated to contribute to quality services for individuals with autism. A program, however, need not meet each guideline in order to provide effective services.

Certain guidelines will be more or less important depending on the circumstances affecting the particular agency and each person with autism and his/her family. It should be noted that many guidelines apply to each section.

The New Jersey Task Force on Autism is a continuing forum for parents and professionals to address issues of concern in serving individuals with autism. COSAC, an agency which provides services in the areas of information/referral, advocacy and education, is the convener of the Task Force.

THIS BROCHURE IS PART **TWO** OF A THREE PART SERIES ON IDENTIFYING APPROPRIATE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM.

PART ONE: General guidelines for education and treatment for individuals with autism.

PART TWO: Guidelines pertaining to adult day training/workshops.

PART THREE: Guidelines pertaining to group homes for children and adults.

PART TWO

GUIDELINES PERTAINING TO ADULT DAY TRAINING/WORKSHOPS

FACT: Individuals with autism require specialized services which are distinct from services required by other populations.

Does the program appear to be sensitive to the level of development of the participants?

Are the programs age appropriate?

Are ancillary services such as speech therapy provided?

FACT: Adults with autism require individualized planning to ensure appropriate treatment. Research has repeatedly demonstrated the efficacy of data-based treatments. Data allow for accountability and provides an objective means of evaluation.

Is the program individualized to meet the unique needs of each adult?

Is there evidence of systematic implementation of the participant's Individualized Habilitation Plan (IHP)?

What is the staff-participant ratio? Is one-to-one available?

Is there objective (data-based) observation, measurement and evaluation of behaviors and of the effectiveness of programs?

FACT: An effective staff ensures effective treatment.

Are the staff experienced and appropriately trained professionals? For example, do they receive an ongoing formal training program in effective teaching and behavior management strategies?

Is there a good system of organization and supervison of staff?

Are they working appropriately with the participants?

Is it evident that there is adequate staff supervision and feedback?

FACT: It is important for parents, guardians, and professionals to explore what exists and make placement decisions based on what is best for the person with autism.

Is there a central philosophy of training and programming?

Can all staff members explain and support it?

Do you as a parent/guardian or professional support it?

FACT: Adults with autism have the right to attend appropriate and effective programs in the least restrictive environment and to benefit from participating in community activities.

Does the program foster community-based awareness?

Are the participants involved in community shopping, banking, etc.?

Is there a system of money management?

Is the quality of work completed in the program important to the participants and staff?

Could manufactured items be sold competitively?

Are sub-contractors satisfied with the quality of the participants' work?

Is the program open all year? Are the hours close to a 30-35 hour work?

What are the strategies and policies for normalization?

FACT: Suspension for inappropriate behavior is detrimental to the development of an individual with autism.

What are the program's policies relative to crisis intervention and suspension?

FACT: Accreditation ensures adherence to standardized basic and legal guidelines (e.g., building characteristics, fire drills, balanced lunches) and demonstrates a professional attitude regarding provision of services.

Is the program approved by the Division of Developmental Disabilities or is it a member of an organization whose guidelines you can refer to?

FACT: It is important to have an effective governing body which enhances communication and ensures accountability.

Is there a governing body? What is its role? Do you have access to it?

For the complete three part series, call or write:

NJ Council of Organizations and Schools for Autistic Children and Adults (COSAC)

123 Franklin Corner Road
Suite 215
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648
1-800-4-AUTISM (in NJ)
609-895-0190

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SERVICES AVAILABLE FOR ADULTS WITH AUTISM CONTACT THE DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (DDD) OFFICE IN YOUR COUNTY.

NORTHERN REGIONAL OFFICE
(serving Sussex, Warren, Morris, Passaic, Bergen, Hudson Counties)
201-852-1214/1216
201-744-3140

CENTRAL REGIONAL OFFICE
(serving Essex, Union, Somerset, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Mercer, Monmouth, Ocean Counties)
201-968-8100 210-244-3033
609-298-5981/5985/5986

SOUTHERN REGIONAL OFFICE
(serving Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, Salem, Cumberland, Atlantic, Cape May Counties)
609-751-0240/0241

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GUIDELINES TO ASSIST FAMILIES AND PROFESSIONALS WHEN LOOKING FOR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH AUTISM

PART THREE

GUIDELINES PERTAINING TO GROUP HOMES FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS

DEVELOPED BY THE NEW JERSEY TASK FORCE ON AUTISM AND ENDORSED BY THE NJ COUNCIL OF ORGANIZATIONS AND SCHOOLS FOR AUTISTIC CHILDREN AND ADULTS

The following guidelines have been developed by the New Jersey Task Force on Autism and endorsed by the New Jersey Council of Organizations and Schools for Autistic Children and Adults (COSAC) to assist families and professionals in identifying appropriate programs and services for persons with autism.

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THIS BROCHURE IS PART **THREE** OF A THREE PART SERIES ON IDENTIFYING APPROPRIATE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM.

PART ONE: General guidelines for education and treatment for individuals with autism.

PART TWO: Guidelines pertaining to adult day training/workshops.

PART THREE: Guidelines pertaining to group homes for children and adults.

PART THREE

GUIDELINES PERTAINING TO GROUP HOMES FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS

The guidelines described previously in part one for educational programs will in most cases apply to group homes as well. The items below represent additional factors that should be considered when evaluating a potential group home placement.

FACT: Individuals with autism who need residential services require specialized services which are distinct from those required by other populations.

Is the program accessible to and does the program make use of existing community resources?

Does the group home look like other houses in the neighborhood?

Does the group home have a home-like atmosphere?

How does the group home promote normal daily living?

Does the group home offer adequate recreational activities in the home and provide opportunities for recreation in the community?

FACT: Group home programs must be individualized to meet the unique needs of each person living in the home.

Do all of the individuals with autism in the home participate in ongoing activities that appear to be appropriate to their skill level?

Is the group home program coordinated with each individual's day program?

Does there appear to be enough staff to provide adequate supervision? Is one-to-one available if needed?

FACT: Individuals with autism will benefit from a group home program that provides the individual with frequent opportunities to learn new skills and encourages the individual to assume responsibility for his/her needs.

Is there evidence of an active teaching program in the group home?

Do all of the individuals in the home participate in activities that contribute to the daily operation of the home?

How are behavior problems handled in the group home?

FACT: Group home staff require specialized skills to ensure that the individuals with autism in the home receive appropriate, effective services.

How are group home staff hired? Does the program have criteria governing the selection of staff?

What pre-service and in-service training are provided to group home staff? Does the staff receive formal training in effective teaching and behavior management strategies?

How does the group home evaluate the performance of its staff?

FACT: Group homes function more effectively when the parents'/guardians' rights and responsibilities are clearly understood by the parents/guardians and the group home staff.

What expectations do the group home staff have regarding the role of the natural parents if their son/daughter is to be placed in the group home?

Is the program open 365 days per year? If the program closes, what provisions are made for families who need assistance at these times?

How are parents involved in treatment planning for their son/daughter with autism?

Is there a positive, open atmosphere in the group home?

Are group home staff receptive to questions, concerns, complaints etc. raised by parents/guardians?

FACT: Group homes are licensed to ensure that each home meets a set of standards, and the group home is regularly evaluated against this set of standards.

Is the group home's license in evidence? Are the standards governing this license available?

Are the policies and procedures of the group home agency available?

What are the group home's procedures for intake and discharge of individuals with autism?

How are health and safety considerations handled in the group home?

Is the home neat, clean, safe and in good repair?

Is the home large enough for the number of people who live in it?

Is the group home affiliated with a professional organization? Are there criteria governing membership in the organization? Does the organization have an accreditation/certification process?

FACT: It is important to have an effective governing body which enhances communication and ensures accountability.

Is there a governing body?

What is its role?

Do you have access to it?

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT GROUP HOME SERVICES:

CHILDREN UNDER 21 YEARS

DIVISION OF YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES (DYFS)
Call your district DYFS office as listed in your local yellow pages, or to get your district office phone number call DYFS Information Services at 609-292-0980

ADULTS OVER 21 YEARS

DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (DDD)

NORTHERN REGIONAL OFFICE
(serving Sussex, Warren, Morris, Passaic, Bergen, Hudson Counties)
201-852-1214/1216
201-744-3140

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(serving Essex, Union, Somerset, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Mercer, Monmouth, Ocean Counties)
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609-895-0190

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Guidelines for the Selection of an Appropriate Educational Placement for the Student with Autism

A CHECKLIST TO ASSESS SERVICE APPROPRIATENESS

The Autism Outreach Project

The Bancroft School
Hopkins Lane
Haddonfield, NJ
(609) 429-0010

COSAC
123 Franklin Corner Road
Suite 215
Lawrenceville, NJ
(609) 895-0190

This Checklist is designed to assist parents in evaluating a school or program's appropriateness for a student with autism or autistic-like behaviors. It is intended to be used in conjunction with the NJ Task Force on Autism's Guidelines to Assist Families and Professionals When Looking for a Program for Children and Adults with Autism: Part I. *Please read that pamphlet prior to using this checklist.*

How to Use this Checklist

Some of the characteristics listed will be easily observable. Others will require you to ask questions. Once you have made an appointment to visit a potential school placement, you can use this checklist to help formulate questions you would like answered. You may wish to request a pamphlet or brochure describing the program before your visit to help you plan specific questions about the components of the program.

This checklist includes programmatic characteristics which research has shown contribute to the effectiveness of a school or program. As a general rule, the more of these characteristics a school has, the more likely it will be able to meet the needs of a student with autism. It is important to add, however, that each child is different and has very specific educational needs. Therefore, some of these characteristics will be more important than others depending on a child's needs. *Parents should assess their child's specific needs before visiting or selecting a program.*

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT & STRUCTURE

- ☐ The teachers have instructional control. (The room does not appear hectic).
- ☐ The classroom activities are well organized and seem to run smoothly.
- ☐ Staff members are aware of the activities of all the children in the room.
- ☐ Classroom and play areas appear to be safe.
- ☐ Children are not allowed to wander or engage excessively in inappropriate or self-stimulatory behaviors.
- ☐ There is a daily schedule which is being followed.
- ☐ Activities are appropriate to the ages and levels of functioning of the children in the classroom.
- ☐ There are other children in the classroom who seem similar to your child. (He/She would be among "peers").

STUDENT/STAFF RATIO

- ☐ There is at least one teacher or aide for every three (3) children in the room.
- ☐ There are no more than six (6) children in a classroom.
- ☐ One-to-one is available if needed (such as in teaching a new skill).

TEACHING METHODS

- ☐ Learning activities are functional and useful for the children.
- ☐ Highly-structured, behavioral teaching methods are used.
- ☐ A motivational system is used within the classroom.
- ☐ There is a thorough and well monitored set of procedures which describe the ways in which inappropriate, self-stimulatory, aggressive and non-compliant behaviors are addressed and treated.
- ☐ Medication is used only when prescribed by a child's physician and is carefully monitored.

PROGRESS EVALUATION

- ☐ Objective measures which assess the academic and behavioral progress of each child (Data), are obtained daily.
- ☐ Data, including a baseline period, (pre-treatment), are obtained for all behavior reduction procedures.
- ☐ Data are evaluated by staff on a regular basis to assess student progress.
- ☐ Progress reports are submitted to parents at least three (3) times a year.
- ☐ Daily home/school communication takes place and is encouraged.

ACCOUNTABILITY

☐ Staff are monitored and supervised on a regular basis.

☐ Staff are credentialed for the positions they hold and the functions they serve.

☐ Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled.

RELATED SERVICES

☐ One-to-one speech therapy is available for appropriate candidates.

☐ Group speech therapy is available.

☐ There is a full-day program for pre-schoolers.

☐ An extended school year (summer program) is available.

☐ In-home programming is available if needed.

☐ A parent training program is available.

☐ A parent support group is available.

☐ A sibling support group is available.

YOUR REACTIONS

☐ The teachers and other staff seemed to be the kind of people you would like to educate your child.

☐ The program's philosophy regarding the use of medication to manage behavior problems is consistant with your own.

☐ You were able to ask about and understand the nature of the behavior reduction procedures being used.

☐ You felt welcome and comfortable.

☐ You felt good about the program the next day.

Under a grant from the New Jersey Department of Human Services' Division of Developmental Disabilities, *The Autism Outreach Project* has been assisting parents and professionals since 1984.

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- PARENT TRAINING GROUPS
- ADVOCACY ASSISTANCE
- SUPPORT GROUPS
- PROFESSIONAL TRAINING
- TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
- CONSULTATION

— INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS —

- A RESOURCE DIRECTORY FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM IN NJ
- ADVOCATING FOR YOUR CHILD
- AUTISM: BASIC INFORMATION
- CHILDREN GROW UP: AUTISM IN ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS
- PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM
- *OUTREACH*, A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS
- *SPECTRUM*, A SEMI-ANNUAL PUBLICATION FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS